R/V REGINA MARIS

— Ship to Shore News —

SEARCHLIGHT Vol. 7 No. 30 15 November 1982 26°14'N 53°54'W

On the Sargasso Sea, 500 miles north of St. John's, U.S. Virgin Islands

This morning finds us sailing steadily along at 4 knots on a port tack. The wind is 15 knots from the east northeast and the sea is calm, with the exception of a long easterly swell--the only reminder of last week's high wind and sea. It wasn't until 36 hours ago that the North Atlantic weather rewarded us for our perseverance with fair winds and a following sea. Since then it has been very pleasant, perhaps the harbinger of things to come as we sail south through the northeast trade winds for the Tropic of Cancer.

All was ready for departure from Bermuda on Tuesday, November 9th, but the bad weather and accompanying high wind and rough seas, our constant companions since Saturday, November 6th, had still not subsided. Our first break in weather came on Friday, November 12th, and we took advantage of it to continue south. The American schooner RACHEL AND EBENEZER of Freeport, New York, departed from Bermuda shortly after we did. During the afternoon on Friday she came up astern and we sailed in company for the next 24 hours--a rare and beautiful sight.

By Saturday night, east to northeast winds which had been blowing 25 to 30 knots since our departure eased to 10 to 15 knots, the sky cleared, and the long easterly swell became less pronounced. Sunday dawned a beautiful day with a calm sea and 15 knots of fair, northeasterly wind. Although the swells still made it hard to do much sampling, we were able to do water temperature work with the bathythermograph and our students and science staff were hard at work interpreting the results. With the exception of a few sightings of sea birds, little marine life has been observed here in the Sargasso Sea during the last 48 hours. This is not terribly unusual. However, the large rafts of sargassum we would ordinarily see here have also been absent. This, we suspect, is because the high winds of the last ten days blew the rafts apart.

Within the next 24 hours we should be well into the zone of the northeast trade winds. All hands look forward to continued fair sailing.

Respectfully submitted,

Lawrence Kilduff
ORV REGINA MARIS

********** SPECIAL NOTICE **********

Wow! Your response to the notice in the last SEARCHLIGHT concerning membership participation in Expedition 43 was overwhelming. We're sorry that we were unable to accommodate all of you who contacted the office. However, I have good news. We have a good number of berths available on Expedition 46, February 7 to March 17. This voyage is available for either 2, 4, or the full 6 weeks of participation, with academic credit available for those aboard for the full time.

Research will focus on humpback whales on their breeding ground in the Caribbean off the coast of the Dominican Republic. Studies will be made in the areas of population dynamics, acoustic behavior and photographic identification.

Please consider joining us. Start your spring early aboard REGINA MARIS. For more information, contact me at the O.R.E.S. office (617) 523-3455.

Bill Barton
Director of Students

SEARCHLIGHT Vol. 7 No. 31 22 November 1982 Round Bay, St. John's
U.S. Virgin Islands

On the evening of November 15th, we were motor sailing through the Horse Latitudes, an area of light winds on the northern edge of the northeast trade winds. Rain squalls and thunderstorms moved in and remained through the night, but we sailed along anyway, taking in and setting sail as necessary. More light air on the morning of the 16th forced us to motor sail again, and by afternoon we found ourselves in flat calm at the Tropic of Cancer, latitude 23 °27'N. After completing a bathythermograph and two plankton tows, we hove to for a swim call, utilizing a rare hour of calm in mid-ocean. That night again brought squalls, a common occurrence in the tropics.

Wednesday, November 17th, was partly cloudy with a light northeast trade wind. We took the opportunity to shorten sail and perform two plankton tows. The first, of 15 minutes duration at a shallow depth, provided little in the way of marine life. The second was two hours long and at a greater depth, and although it brought up more samples than the first, the net yield was negligible. The same tow in the nutrient-rich waters of New England would have filled our nets.

Soon we were underway again and had a pleasant sail through the night. By midday on Thursday, November 18th, the sky had again become overcast, with numerous squalls, some very large but most with little wind. A weather forecast from the Coast Guard in Virginia mentioned nothing about a weather change, but all around us were signs of a cold front passing.

We continued due south through the night, with all watch members awaiting the first sight of land. At 02:50 November 19th lights from the islands of St. Thomas and Tortola were visible, and by sunrise we were able to distinguish individual islands. Even shrouded in wind and rain, mountainous islands are a majestic sight after eight days at sea. Early afternoon found us at anchor off Cruz Bay, the capital of St. John's, U.S. Virgin Islands, awaiting customs clearance.

Saturday morning, all formalities done with, we moved to Hurricane Hole on the east end of St. John's, where we found a suitable anchorage and study site at Round Bay, and began preparations for our reef study which starts today.

Respectfully submitted,

Lawrence Kilduff
ORV REGINA MARIS

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